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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,  
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USAID/ANE/MEA  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON ISRAEL-HIZBOLLAH COMBAT

Editorial Commentary

-- "Mass helplessness"

Columnist Sameeh Maitah writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (08/07): "During the current crisis of the aggression against Lebanon, there is an indisputable Arab official helplessness. Having said that, what about the popular organizations and forces everywhere. Are they not too suffering from similar helplessness? We all call for supporting Lebanon, but how, who and when remain all unanswered questions.... We are all helpless, regimes and people. We have lost the ability to influence and to act. We simply discharge our energies in demonstrations, speech rallies, statements and humanitarian assistance."

-- "Meeting in lost time"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (08/07): "The Arabs are so late trying to create a united Arab stand vis-`-vis the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. Four long weeks have passed. The Arab countries could have agreed on a political initiative and sought support and approval for it. But the Arab regimes failed to do that, and the result is that the Arab foreign ministers are meeting in lost time. They will declare support for Lebanon. They will call for halting the war. They will urge the Security Council to amend its expected resolution. But no one is going to listen to them. Beirut will continue to suffer from Israeli bombings and from the disasters of war."

-- "The French American draft: Israel first"

Columnist Abu Yazan writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Ad-Dustour (08/07): "The American French draft resolution is likely to establish a new stage of the ongoing conflict in Lebanon instead of being a beginning for a comprehensive settlement of pending issues between Lebanon and Israel. This draft does certainly seek to enable Israel to achieve its goals through the Security Council after it failed to achieve them through jet planes and rockets.... The draft resolution will not end the fighting. Hizbollah will continue to stand up to the Israeli forces in the south. The draft opens the door for a Lebanese internal conflict that could deepen divisions in a manner that threatens its national stability and unity. The draft will also establish a more extensive Lebanese-Arab division, as most Arab countries will propose to the Lebanese government to accept the resolution."

-- "Immoral and unrealistic"

Columnist Nahed Hattar writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (08/07): "The American French draft UNSC resolution is of course immoral. But that is a minor point because the Washington-led western alliance is hopelessly immoral, as it considers the Arab world a topic for thievery and imperialistic hegemony, and cares nothing for the victims and the suffering, national rights or social progress. All it wants is the oil and the control even if the price was the destruction of countries and the tearing apart of communities. The criminal draft is designed to move the war to inside Lebanon and stir civil war. This is after the Israeli aggression failed to bring the Lebanese people down to their knees.... The main point of this viscous draft is that it is unrealistic. It is asking the Lebanese resistance and the Lebanese to surrender unconditionally when they the victorious ones in the war."

-- "Disappointing formula"

Centrist, elite English daily Jordan Times (08/07) editorializes: "It is highly disappointing that the agreement reached between the United States and France could not come up with a better formula for ensuring an immediate end to hostilities.... It is astonishing that there should even be a question over whether an end to the humanitarian suffering should precede a political deal or come later. Clearly, an end to the senseless killing must come first. If talks are undertaken while the killing continues, there will always be a reason to continue fighting. That clearly is not how Washington sees it. And that certainly comes as a relief to Israel.... Resolution or no resolution, Israel will continue killing the Lebanese for as long as Washington can stall the international community.... Washington must be blamed for failing to rein in an Israeli government devoid of strategies other than brutality on how to 'co-exist' with its neighbors."

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